



COVID-19 booster drive is faltering in the U.S.

By MAE ANDERSON
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The COVID-19 booster drive in the U.S. is losing steam, worrying health experts who have pleaded with Americans to get an extra shot to shore up their protection against the highly contagious omicron variant. Just 40% of fully vaccinated Americans have received a booster dose, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And the average number of booster shots dispensed per day in the U.S. has plummeted from a peak of 1 million in early December to about 490,000 as of last week.

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MISSED SHOT

Riley Bredbeck, 13, from Westminster, Vt., looks away when getting the Pfizer COVID-19 booster during a vaccine clinic that was hosted by Rescue Inc. at Bellows Falls Fire Department, Friday, Jan. 14, 2022, in Bellows Falls, Vt.

Associated Press

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COVID-19 booster drive is faltering in the U.S.

Continued from Front

Also, a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that Americans are more likely to see the initial vaccinations — rather than a booster — as essential.

"It's clear that the booster effort is falling short," said Jason Schwartz, a vaccine policy expert at Yale University.

Overall, the U.S. vaccination campaign has been sluggish. More than 13 months after it began, just



Pharmacist Kenni Clark injects Robert Champion, of Lawrence, Mass., with a booster dosage of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine during a vaccination clinic at City of Lawrence's "The Center," which serves seniors, families and the community, Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2021, in Lawrence, Mass.

Associated Press

63% of Americans, or 210 million people, are fully vaccinated with the initial rounds of shots. Mandates that could raise those numbers have been hobbled by legal challenges.

Vaccination numbers are stagnant in states such as Wyoming, Idaho, Mississippi and Alabama, which have been hovering below 50%. In Wyoming, 44% are fully vaccinated, up just slightly from 41% in September.

To boost numbers, the state has been running TV ads with health care workers giving grim accounts of unvaccinated people struggling with COVID-19.

"Certainly we would like to see higher rates. But it would be wrong for anyone to think that the rates we have are due to lack of effort," Wyoming Health Department spokeswoman Kim Deti said Tuesday.

At the other end of the spectrum, Vermont is a national leader in the percentage of people who have been fully vaccinated and received a booster shot. About 60% of the population over 18 has gotten a booster. But it's not enough, said Vermont Health Commissioner Mark Levine. "I'd love to see that percentage much closer to 90%," Levine said.

The U.S. and many other nations have been urging adults to get boosters because the vaccine's protection can wane. Also, research has shown that while the vaccines have proved less effective against omicron, boosters can rev up the body's defenses against the threat.

As for why an estimated 86 million Americans who have been fully vaccinated and are eligible for a booster have not yet gotten one, Schwartz said public confusion is one important reason.

"I think the evidence is now overwhelming that the booster is not simply an optional supplement, but it is a foundational part of protection," he said. "But clearly that message has been lost." The need for all Americans to get boosters initially was debated by scientists, and at first the government recommended only that certain groups of people, such as senior citizens, get additional doses.

The arrival of omicron, and additional evidence about falling immunity, showed more clearly a widespread need for boosters.

Only 47% say the same about a booster shot.

Keller Anne Ruble, 32, of Denver, received her two doses of the Moderna vaccine but hasn't gotten her booster. She said she had a bad reaction to the second dose and was in bed for four days with a fever and flu-like symptoms.

"I believe in the power of vaccines, and I know that's going to protect me," said Ruble, the owner of a greeting card sending service. But the vaccine "just knocked me out completely and freaked me out about getting the booster." She said she does plan to get the booster in the next few weeks and in the meantime wears an N95 mask and tries to stay home. □

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SAT going digital in shifting college admissions landscape

By **CAROLYN THOMPSON**
Associated Press

The SAT exam will move from paper and pencil to a digital format, administrators announced Tuesday, saying the shift will boost its relevancy as more colleges make standardized tests optional for admission.

Test-takers will be allowed to use their own laptops or tablets but they'll still have to sit for the test at a monitored testing site or in school, not at home.

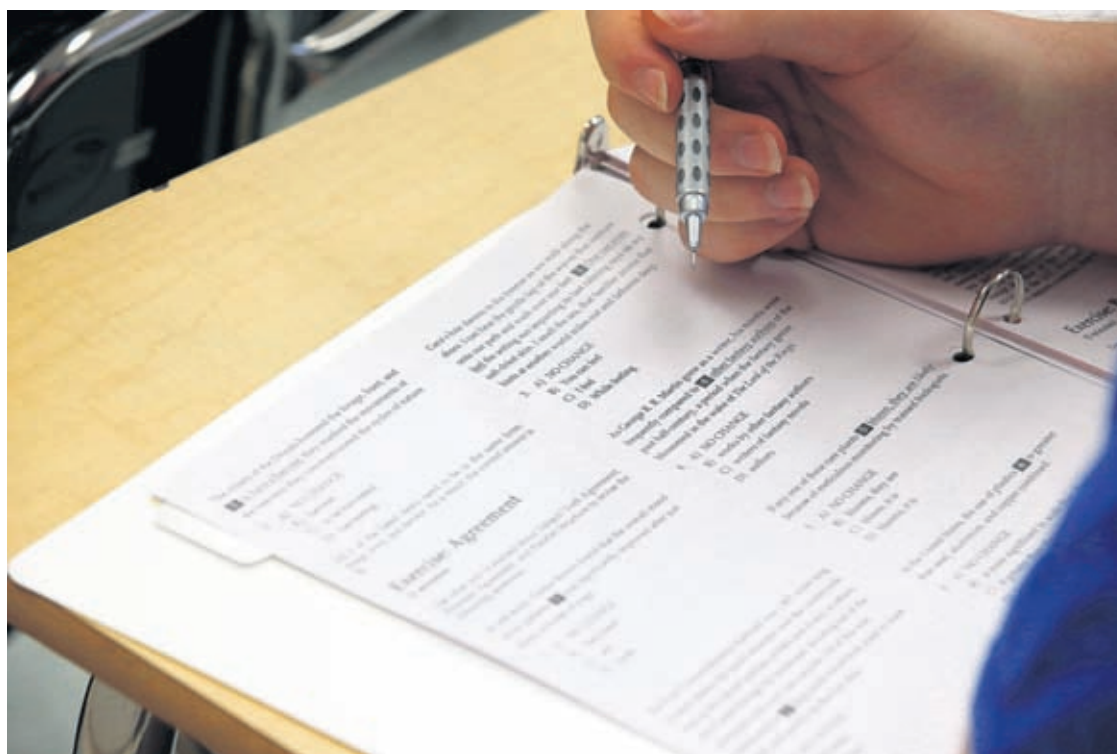
The format change is scheduled to roll out internationally next year and in the U.S. in 2024. It will also shave an hour from the current version, bringing the reading, writing and math assessment from three hours to about two.

"The digital SAT will be easier to take, easier to give, and more relevant," said Priscilla Rodriguez, vice president of College Readiness Assessments at the New York City-based College Board, which administers the SAT and related PSAT. "We're not simply putting the current SAT on a digital platform. We're taking full advantage of what delivering an assessment digitally makes possible."

Once essential for college applications, scores from admission tests like the SAT and rival ACT carry less weight today as colleges and universities pay more attention to the sum of student achievements and activities throughout high school. Amid criticism that the exams favor wealthy, white applicants and disadvantage minority and low-income students, an increasing number of schools have in recent years adopted test-optional policies, which let students decide whether to include scores with their applications.

The pandemic accelerated the trend as testing sessions were canceled or inaccessible.

Nearly 80% of bachelor's degree-granting institutions are not requiring test scores from students applying for fall 2022, according to a December tally by the National Center for Fair



In this photo taken Jan. 17, 2016, a student looks at questions during a college test preparation class at Holton Arms School in Bethesda, Md.

Associated Press

& Open Testing, a watchdog group that opposes standardized testing. The group, known as FairTest, said at least 1,400 of them have extended the policy through at least the fall 2023 admissions cycle.

About 1.5 million members of the class of 2021 took the SAT at least once, down from 2.2 million in the previous year. A College Board survey found many students want to take the SAT to preserve the option of submitting the scores and qualifying for certain scholarships. Rodriguez said the digital version will be delivered in a format more familiar to students who regularly learn and test online at school. Also, student score reports will not only focus on connecting students with four-year colleges and scholarships, but also provide information about two-year college and workforce training options. That reflects an increase in the number of students who are given the exam during a designated SAT day at school, with some districts requiring students take it. About 60% of students who take the SAT do so at school, Rodriguez said.

"We want to present students with a wider range of information and resources about their post-secondary options," she said.

Scores will be available in days, rather than weeks, she said. There have been cases through the years of sets of paper exams getting lost in the mail. "The digital version, I thought, was a lot less stressful than the paper and pencil version. It felt a lot more familiar," said Natalia Cossio, 16, of Fairfax County, Virginia, who took part in a November pilot after first taking the PSAT on paper.

She said the digital format would solve some logistical issues she's seen, like students bringing mechanical pencils instead of the required No. 2 variety, or advanced calculators that are not allowed. The digital version includes a basic calculator for the math section. □

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Extremists see U.S. power grid as target, gov't report warns

By **BEN FOX**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Extremist groups in the United States appear to increasingly view attacking the power grid as a means of disrupting the country, according to a government report aimed at law enforcement agencies and utility operators.

Domestic extremists “have developed credible, specific plans to attack electricity infrastructure since at least 2020,” according to the report from the Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Intelligence and Analysis. The document, dated Monday, was obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press.

The report warns that extremists “adhering to a range of ideologies will likely continue to plot and encourage physical attacks against electrical infrastructure,” which includes more than 6,400 power plants and 450,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines that span the country. Experts on the U.S. power grid in the past have pointed out that it would be difficult to knock out power to the nation given the size and decentralized nature of the grid. The DHS report also notes that extremist attackers, without inside help at least, would be unlikely to cause widespread, mul-



Central Maine Power utility lines are seen on Oct. 6, 2021, in Pownal, Maine.

Associated Press

tistate outages.

Both the FBI and DHS have repeatedly warned in recent months that the U.S. faces a heightened threat from domestic extremists. The report notes that an attack on the grid could still result in injuries and damage even without causing a major outage.

The grid is viewed as a target, based on a series of incidents in recent years as well as online discussions in extremist and conspiracy-minded forums, because transmission lines and substations are often in remote, rural areas and causing outages may cause further frustration and divisions

within American society, a federal law enforcement official said.

“They feel that disrupting the electrical supply will disrupt the ability of government to operate,” the official said on condition of anonymity to discuss a report that has not been publicly released. “And, secondly, by conducting attacks against the communications and electrical infrastructure, it will actually accelerate the coming civil war that they anticipate because it will disrupt the lives of so many people that they will lose faith in government.”

Some of these concerns

are nearly a decade old. In 2014, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ordered grid operators to increase security following a sniper attack on the Pacific Gas & Electric Company’s Metcalf Transmission Substation in an isolated area southeast of San Jose, California. No arrests have ever been made in an assault that stunned authorities and could have disrupted power to Silicon Valley. DHS noted the Metcalf incident in the report as more recent incidents, including a suspected plot by white supremacist extremists to attack power stations in the southeastern U.S. as part of

an effort to cause havoc if they disagreed with the outcome of the November 2020 election. Asked about the report, the Edison Electric Institute, an association that represents companies that provide power to about 70% of the U.S. population, said it has been working for years with the government to respond to a range of potential dangers. “Our industry is working constantly to adapt to new and evolving threats to the grid, whether that’s by protecting against malicious threats like cyber and physical attacks or addressing the challenges of extreme weather caused by climate change,” Scott Aaronson, the association’s senior vice president for security and preparedness, said by email.

The report also mentioned that four suspected extremists were accused in October 2020 of a plot to damage transformers in Idaho and nearby states and the arrest in May 2020 of three alleged militia extremists, tied to the antigovernment Boogaloo movement, who were charged in a conspiracy to attack an electrical substation in Las Vegas.

“The electrical companies and state and local law enforcement need to be aware of this and need to take steps,” said the federal law enforcement official. □



In this courtroom sketch, Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, foreground right, reads a statement through an interpreter during his sentencing in federal court, July 17, 2019, in New York.

Associated Press

By **TOM HAYS**

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The conviction of the notorious

Mexican drug lord Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman was upheld Tuesday by a U.S. appeals court that praised

U.S. court upholds conviction of Mexican drug lord El Chapo

the trial judge for his handling of a case that drew international attention.

The decision by the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan rejected claims that Judge Brian Cogan made rulings allowing a jury to hear faulty evidence at Guzman’s 2019 trial. Cogan “conducted the three-month trial with diligence and fairness, after issuing a series of meticulously crafted pretrial rulings,” the ruling by the panel concluded.

Guzman, 64, was sentenced to life behind bars

for a massive drug conspiracy that spread murder and mayhem for more than two decades.

On appeal, his lawyers had argued that the guilty verdict was tainted because some jurors reportedly sought out news accounts about sex abuse allegations against him that were barred from the trial, and that Cogan erred by not ordering a hearing on the reports. “The decision seems like it was decided and written before the argument even occurred,” one of Guzman’s lawyers,

Jeffrey Lichtman, said in a statement Tuesday. “How can there be justice here when the jury was exposed to scurrilous claims against Mr. Guzman which were not part of the government’s case?”

The appeals court found that Cogan was to correct in finding “that the jury was not prejudiced by any extraneous information to which they might have been exposed.” It added: “Any possible prejudice was harmless in view of the overwhelming evidence of Guzman’s guilt.” □

Russia adds Navalny and his top allies to list of terrorists

By **DASHA LITVINOVA**

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian authorities have added imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny and some of his top allies to the country's registry of terrorists and extremists, the latest move in a multi-pronged crackdown on opposition supporters, independent media and human rights activists.

Navalny, Russian President Vladimir Putin's fiercest critic, and eight of his allies — including top aides Lyubov Sobol and Georgy Albuov — were on Tuesday added to the registry by Russia's Federal Financial Monitoring Service. The law requires that the bank accounts of those on the list be frozen.

The move comes just a over a year after Navalny's arrest, which triggered a wave of the biggest mass protests across the country in years. The politician was detained upon his return from Germany, where he spent five months recovering from a nerve agent poisoning he blamed on the Kremlin. Russian authorities have denied any involvement.

Navalny was ordered to serve 2 1/2 years in prison



Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny gestures as he stands in a cage in the Babuskinsky District Court in Moscow, Russia, Saturday, Feb. 20, 2021.

for violating the terms of a suspended sentence stemming from a 2014 fraud conviction. In the following months, Navalny's brother Oleg and many of his top allies also faced criminal charges, and the authorities outlawed his Foundation for Fighting Corruption and a sprawling network of regional offices as extremist, paralyzing their operations.

Russian authorities have also ratcheted up pressure

on independent media and human rights groups in recent months. Dozens have been labeled as foreign agents — a designation that implies additional government scrutiny and strong pejorative connotations that discredit the recipient.

Some were declared "undesirable" — a label that outlaws organizations in Russia — or were accused of links to "undesirable" groups, and several were

forced to shut down or disband to prevent further prosecution.

The authorities on Tuesday also petitioned the court to have Oleg Navalny serve his one-year suspended sentence in prison. Last year Oleg, together with his brother's top allies, was convicted of violating coronavirus regulations over the protests in support of the politician, and handed a one-year suspended sentence.

Associated Press

Previously Oleg was convicted of fraud alongside his brother in 2014, but while Alexei received a suspended sentence, Oleg was ordered to serve 3 1/2 years in prison. He was released in June 2018.

The crackdown on Alexei Navalny and other dissenting voices in Russia has elicited outrage in the West.

On Tuesday, EU foreign affairs spokesman Peter Stano reiterated that "this is not acceptable, that we see this as a continued repression against the critical voices in Russian society." Lyubov Sobol, who had left the country after standing two trials on criminal charges last year, told The Associated Press on Tuesday she believed the decision to add Navalny, herself and other allies to the registry of terrorists and extremists was made in the Kremlin.

"There's absolutely no doubt that the decision regarding myself, Navalny and my closest associates and colleagues was made in the Kremlin with personal contribution by Vladimir Putin. I think he has all matters involving our team under a special control, and it's not a decision made by lower-ranked officials," Sobol said. □

Dutch government eases lockdown despite soaring infections

By **MIKE CORDER**

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands

(AP) — Prime Minister Mark Rutte further eased the Netherlands' coronavirus lockdown, allowing bars, restaurants, museums, theaters and other venues to reopen from Wednesday for the first time this year. But Rutte warned that the move wasn't without risks. "We are taking a big step today to unlock the Netherlands while the infections numbers are really going through the roof," Rutte said Tuesday.

The announcement wasn't all good news for the beleaguered hospitality and cultural sectors, with the

opening hours limited to 10 p.m., while professional sports teams will only be allowed to fill stadiums to a third of their normal capacities.

Soccer clubs and administrators protested the move even before it was officially announced, calling it in a joint statement "a proposal without perspective."

The relaxation of restrictions follows widespread protests in recent weeks by business owners ranging from the Van Gogh Museum to local cafes at being excluded from an earlier easing of pandemic restrictions.

Infections have spiked in

recent weeks because of the omicron variant, despite the lockdown that was tougher than in most of Europe, but admissions to the country's intensive care units have been declining.

The national public health institute reported a 51% rise in new COVID-19 cases over the last week to more than 366,000, while ICU admissions dropped by 34%.

"We are taking another risk," Health Minister Ernst Kuipers said.

"We are doing that for good reason. Living longer with many restrictive measures damages our health and our society."



A lone girl waits for a tram in a near-deserted street full of closed restaurants, bars and shop under a partial lockdown in Amsterdam, Netherlands, Friday, Nov. 26, 2021.

Associated Press

Omicron is less likely to cause severe illness than the previous delta variant, according to studies. Omicron spreads even more easily than other coronavirus strains, and has already become dominant in many countries.

It also more easily infects those who have been vaccinated or had previ-

ously been infected by prior versions of the virus. The Dutch government sought to mitigate the risk by imposing restrictions on venues where people gather, including the use of coronavirus passports and social distancing and capping the number of people allowed indoors and in stadiums. □

WHO chief makes case for 2nd term as Ethiopia criticizes him

By JAMEY KEATEN

Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus laid out more plans Tuesday to fight the virus as he pitched his case for a new five-year term and faced criticism from his own country — Ethiopia — over his comments about the embattled Tigray region.

Tedros, who like many Ethiopians goes by his first name, is running unopposed for a second term as WHO director-general. That makes his presentation to the U.N. health agency's executive board a bit of a formality, since he is all but certain to win re-election when the WHO Assembly takes place in May.

Recently, Tedros, an ethnic Tigrayan, has come under new criticism from Ethiopia's government, which has been fighting militants in Tigray, for his comments on Twitter and elsewhere that condemned Ethiopia's blockade of international access to Tigray.

He said WHO had not been allowed to send any humanitarian aid to the region since July, and has called for "unfettered" humanitarian access to Tigray, whose people are facing enormous hunger amid the war.

Ethiopia's government, in a Jan. 14 news release, said it had sent a letter to WHO accusing Tedros of "mis-



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), removes his protective face mask prior to speaking to the media regarding the coronavirus COVID-19 and WHO's global health priorities in 2022, during a new press conference, at the World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, Dec. 20, 2021.

Associated Press

conduct" after his sharp criticism of the war and the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa country. The government nominated him for the job in 2017, but has since accused him of interfering in Ethiopia's internal affairs, and claims he has "not lived up to the integrity and professional expectations required from his office."

His current term as WHO's top official — perhaps the highest-profile job in global health — has been overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Under Tedros, WHO faced sharp criticism from former U.S.

President Donald Trump over its early handling of the crisis and has faced pressure over its approach to China, where the outbreak first emerged two years ago.

Last year, independent investigators turned up dozens of cases of sexual abuse and exploitation in Congo during a WHO-led response to an Ebola outbreak there in 2019.

Tedros said Tuesday he was "horrified" by those reports, saying the agency's response to them has been "robust" and his commitment to preventing such exploitation, abuse and

harassment "with a victim- and survivor-centered approach is iron clad."

Many countries have ignored or rejected WHO advice on ways to tackle COVID-19, such as its calls to avoid blanket travel restrictions, or its calls to share vaccines and the technological know-how to make them with less developed nations.

On Monday, Ethiopian government spokesman Legesse Tulu said a WHO official had indicated it would postpone a decision to investigate Tedros.

"If this is the case, it really shows the partiality of

WHO. It opposes its basic principles of foundation. We still insist on this esteem organization to investigate the case," Tulu told The Associated Press.

Ethiopia's ambassador in Geneva, Zenebe Kebede, sought to criticize Tedros for using his office to advance "his personal political interest" as the weeklong executive board session began on Monday.

But he was interrupted by the chairman, who said the diplomatic complaint issued by Ethiopia had been set aside earlier by the board and was not up for discussion.

Kebede was given back the floor, resumed his statement, and was cut off again.

The Ethiopian diplomatic mission in Geneva issued a communique Tuesday saying "such mistreatment against a member country is unacceptable." It said its government was awaiting acknowledgement from WHO that it had received Ethiopia's "formal complaint" about the alleged "misconduct" of Tedros.

Ethiopia claims Tedros is an active member of the Tigray People's Liberation Front. Tedros was Ethiopia's foreign minister and health minister when the TPLF dominated the country's ruling coalition.

In his speech on Tuesday, Tedros didn't refer to the complaints from Ethiopia's government. □



Thailand's Public Health Minister Anutin Chanvirakul shows off a bottle of extracted cannabis oil during a press conference at his ministry in Bangkok, Thailand, Wednesday, Aug. 7, 2019.

Associated Press

Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Thailand on Tuesday became the

first country in Asia to approve the de facto decriminalization of marijuana,

Thailand first in Asia to move to decriminalize marijuana

though authorities have left a grey area around its recreational use.

Health Minister Anutin Chanvirakul announced that the Narcotics Control Board had approved the dropping cannabis from the ministry's list of controlled drugs.

The delisting by the ministry's Food and Drug Administration will now need to be formally signed by the health minister and enters into effect 120 days after its publication in the gov-

ernment gazette. It follows the removal of cannabis — a plant species to which both marijuana and hemp belong — last month from the list of illegal drugs under Thailand's Narcotics Law. Police and lawyers contacted by The Associated Press said it was unclear if possession of marijuana would no longer be an offense subject to arrest. A tangle of related laws means that production and possession of marijuana remains regulated for the time being,

leaving the legal status of recreational marijuana use in a grey area.

The Health Ministry measure retains on its list of controlled drugs parts from the cannabis plant that contain more than 0.2% by weight of tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the psychoactive ingredient that gives users a high.

Thailand in 2020 became the first Asian nation to decriminalize the production and use of marijuana for medicinal purposes. □



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Statue toppled in Puerto Rico before Spanish king's visit



A monument of Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León lays in pieces in Plaza San Jose in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Monday, Jan. 24, 2022.

By DÁNICA COTO

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Unknown people toppled a statue of Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León in the pre-dawn hours of Monday ahead of a visit of Spain's King Felipe VI to the U.S. Caribbean territory of Puerto Rico.

Col. José Juan García, police commissioner for San Juan, told The Associated Press that officers patrolling the cobblestone streets of the capital's historic district heard a loud bang at 4:30 a.m. and found the broken statue.

"It sounded like an explosion," he said.

The statue was made of melted steel from British

cannons and featured the Spanish explorer facing south with his left hand on his hip and right finger pointed toward the first settlement he founded, which was the island's first Spanish capital and is a U.S. National Historic Landmark. The statue also points in the direction of the nearby San Juan Bautista Cathedral that holds Ponce de León's remains and is a popular tourist spot.

Crews in Old San Juan reinstalled the 1,000-plus-pound (589-kilogram) statue a couple hours after the king arrived late Monday afternoon.

A handful of protesters heckled the workers and briefly interrupted their ef-

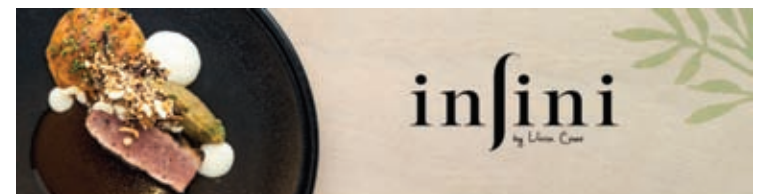
forts, with some posting signs on the statue's base, one of which read, "They're not gods." Protesters said that they would topple it again and that a Christopher Columbus statue was next.

Spain's legacy is prominent across Puerto Rico, with a main road in San Juan named after Ponce de León and a colossal Columbus statue rising along the island's northern coast, a 660-ton sculpture that is more than twice the size of the Statue of Liberty without its pedestal. A much smaller Columbus statue stands at the entrance of Old San Juan, just blocks from the one that was toppled.

San Juan Mayor Miguel Romero defended the re-installation in an interview with Telemundo Puerto Rico, saying, "The Spaniards from 500 years ago are not the same ones of today." He later told reporters after the king arrived: "Freedom of expression is protected, but what cannot be protected is vandalism. I believe vandalism is the most cowardly form of expres-

sion." Two years ago, activists marched through the streets of Old San Juan as they joined a U.S. movement to eradicate symbols of oppression and demanded that Spain's legacy in Puerto Rico be erased.

While some statues have been defaced with graffiti, police said this is the first time such a statue was toppled. □



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The Kitchen Table enters seventh year of gastronomy with raving reviews: “The devil is in the details; we are in praise.”

EAGLE BEACH — While in Aruba do yourself a favor and experience a night at The Kitchen Table. This is an elegant, classy, intimate, high-quality restaurant with an exceptional dining set-up. Dining here is an experience, a kind of sitting- at your-best- friend's or family's kitchen table where you feel and taste that the food contains love. The extra mile the owners and staff go has everything to do with running this lovely restaurant in a sincere, authentic way. In Spanish they say: ‘Mi casa es tu casa’ meaning my house is your house and that describes exactly what you will feel during a night at The Kitchen Table.

The 8-course ecstatic food trip starts with a warm welcome and sparkling wine at the patio of The Kitchen Table's new location at Paradise Beach Villas as of 6.00PM. The chef's table concept is happening on the second floor of the owners' restaurant Asi Es Mi Peru, another highly recommended establishment. But we are here now to guide you through the concept of The Kitchen Table, so let's go. Taking you upstairs is literally taking you into an ambiance of warmth, coziness, classic elegance, and intimacy. You are treated like queen and king while sitting in noble chairs at a huge table. Owners Roxanna Salinas and Jan van Nes are warm and welcoming hosts and Chef David Lizano and Sous-Chef Xalsky Schwengle enthusiastically share their deep knowledge of



the beautiful dishes that will be presented to you. Get ready to dive into the tastebuds tickling journey to the Caribbean, Peruvian and international cuisine. To pair the perfect wines three sommeliers were invited to make the selection.

Table full foodies

The restaurant just got its new menu out, so this is the time to reserve your spot at the table. A Caribbean Peruvian Snack Trio is the enchanting first appetizer existing of a Chicken Empanada, Crab & Shrimp Eggroll and a Cucumber & Tuna Nikkei. This is paired with a delicate Ruffino Oviato (Italy), just perfect. Taking us to the next round we are presented a Mahi Mahi Tartare, delicious and combined with the Spanish Santiago Ruiz Albarino, we are in heaven. What follows is a personal favorite, the Beef Tataki with Quinoa accompanied by La Fage, Miraflores Rose wine from France. This is an amazing dish. In between the courses the owner and chef explain about the ingredients, prepara-

tion, and origins of the dishes in turns, it is truly an interesting and exciting presentation. The Peruvian Red Snapper Casserole is a surprising, wonderful tasting and in complete balance with the USA Cline Viognier from Sonoma Coast. My American-Ecuadorian neighbor was thrilled with this dish and who would be a better judge than she, after all she is from the region. The guests are clearly having a good time and we are in awe so far. The Kitchen Table builds this evening in an upward trend, and we proceed with Scallops and Shrimps within a Risotto of green Peas Puree with a foam of Coconut Milk Sauce. A mouth-melting experience and added to the culinary joy is a USA wine from Yolo County, Phantom Chardonnay. From the Caribbean, Peru we travel to Argentina presented to us with a Veal in her Jus and paired with a beautiful Lunta Malbec. There is no great dinner without a sweet goodbye and The Kitchen Table makes sure that you will not forget them by signing off with a fantastic

dessert: Mango popsicle and a Three-layered Cheesecake together with a Portuguese Osborne Port. We asked a couple from New York how they liked the experience: “The devil is in the details; every tiny part here is balanced, and savors are matched in an unmatched way. We are in praise.”

The secret formula

The Peruvian-born Roxanna Salinas and her husband Jan van Nes are the secret formula behind The Kitchen Table's success. You can tell making the customers happy is their main priority. The couple takes a personal approach to what they do, this is not about running a business as usual. This is more about making you feel welcomed home, as well as being pampered. They bring top hospitality, experience and authenticity to the table. Within this gourmet dinner concept the two blended the Peruvian culinary art of Roxanna's top kitchen team and Jan's expertise from The Kitchen Table. The result is one big trip of delight, indulge and tickling of your taste buds. The Kitchen Table welcomes you with open arms every Tuesday to Saturday. An evening at The Kitchen Table will be noted as unforgettable in your book of vacation memories, as it stands out from the regular island dinners.

The Kitchen Table is open from Tuesday to Saturday. Have a peak on their website www.thekitchentableinaruba.com or call them at +297-280 7117. □

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Update COVID-19 as per January 19, 2022

ORANJESTAD – Here is the latest update on the on-going COVID situation in Aruba.

As of January 25 2022, Aruba registered 583 active cases, of which 104 were non-residents. Whereas the average daily cases over the past seven days total 204. The positivity rate stands at 55%.

Hospitalizations:

There are currently 33 persons hospitalized of which 3 are in the ICU. In Colombia there are 6 persons in ICU. Due to lack of staff at the hospital they have to send patients over to Colombia for treatment.

The measures are as follows since of December 30, 2021

- Curfew: NO Curfew
- Closing Time: 12:00 am for all business for the exception of Casino's which can stay open till 1:00 am
- Restaurants: Max. 6 people per table.
- Social Activities and Sports: Max. people: 60 indoors, 75 outdoors.
- Funerals: Max. people: 75 (if the space is adequately large enough)
- Area Ban 7:00 pm - 5:00 am
- Nightlife: Dancing is not permitted
- Entertainment: Max 5 musicians on stage.

- Gathering Ban: Max. 6 people.
- Shopping: 1 person per family

The following measures remain applicable:

- Masks: Use of masks is mandatory inside at all establishments.
- Alcohol: Ban of alcohol on public roads: 24 hours.
- Social Distancing: Continue maintaining social distance.

Exceptions as of Jan 8, 2022 Persons that have received the booster shot (so all 3 vaccine shots) and persons that were infected with Covid within past 4 weeks no longer need to quarantine

when a housemate tested positive.

Adaptation of testing requirements to enter Aruba As of January 18, 2022, non-resident travelers visiting Aruba have two testing options before boarding.

1. A PCR test is taken per the country of origin's risk level;
2. An Antigen lab-test within 24 hours of travel

You must upload the test results online on the ED card system. The introduction of the Antigen option facilitates the entire testing process travelers have to

go through and makes it possible for more visitors to get their test results in time for their Aruba vacation. This option contributes to the growth of our tourism without increasing the risks of more covid infections. Travelers from high-risk countries still cannot test upon arrival but must show a negative PCR result before boarding.

Residents returning from the USA can get a (PCR) test at the airport upon arrival but can now also get an Antigen test within 24 hours of travel from the USA. □

The Aruba Tourism Authority honor loyal visitors on the island

EAGLE BEACH — Recently, Mr. Mario Arends, OF THE Aruba Tourism Authority, had the great pleasure to honor a Loyal and friendly visitor of Aruba as Emerald Ambassador at his home away from home. The symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between 10-20-35 and more consecutive years.

The honoree was Mr. Colleen Presbrey from Illinois. Presbrey loves coming to the island especially for the great weather, family time and fabulous dinners.

Arends together with the members of Casa del Mar



thanked him for choosing Aruba as his favourite vacation destination and as his home away from home for so many years. □

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Article by Etnia Nativa

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Respect & Solidarity

Our goal at Etnia Nativa is to raise cultural awareness, promoting education and to safeguard our heritage as the sacred mother seed for renewal and reinvention, guiding you to become the next and a new guardian of Aruba.

A happy island needs each visitor to get involved in tourist activities where what is prioritized is respect for the natural, cultural and social environment to define and understand the values of our community. With this type of tourism there is a positive exchange of experiences between visitors and residents, establishing a fair and equitable relationship in terms of the benefits that this activity can generate.

In Aruba, more and more people are aware and concerned about environmental issues and the tourism market is also beginning to realize the negative impact on the environment generated by unsustainable tourist activities. Our society is becoming increasingly aware of the need to preserve our flora, fauna, soil and sea and heritage. In recent times, different environmental defense groups have emerged that exert pressure on public opinion in relation to the effects of tourist activities with the sole purpose to generate revenue regardless of the environmental impact it is causing.

Our small beautiful island, like the entire planet Earth, is going through a decisive moment and our tourism in general should be governed by the principles of sustainability, in order to minimize the impact on the environment and local culture.

To achieve this and generate benefits for the local population, we need our tourism to be aware of the existing socio-political reality.

Aruba and the planet need responsible and supportive tourism and all types of tourism should currently aspire to this responsibility and solidarity, but the current reality of tourism has little to do with these objectives we are advocating for.

Visitors are no longer satisfied with little and that makes the demand for product quality and services higher.

As a consequence, it requires a greater effort to remain competitive in the market. So our officials should roll their sleeves and put heads together in order to mitigate all economic endeavors which cause negative impacts to the environment and the inhabitants of Aruba as on pristine destination.

The European Alliance for Responsible Tourism and Hospitality (EARTH) project defines Responsible Tourism as: "Any specific tourism product or tourism production system in which tourists, actors and local providers assume responsibility for host destinations from the start, involving environmental, cultural, social and economic viability point of view.

Aruba needs to raise awareness of its still unfathomable assets that could be lost without even knowing they exist. It is in the hands of its inhabitants to request legislative protection, safeguards and guaranteed protection of the existence of our ecosystem for our next generation and our future visitors.

As locals we must involve each visitor in the Aruba experience, share with them our reality and our concern.

Etnia Nativa is a small recycled building that has beautiful gardens and occupies an area of 880 m2 in Westpunt. Ten years ago it was surrounded by land of wild vegetation and inhabited by a diverse and varied fauna. Today, as a result of the excessive housing growth in the area, our home museum and sanctuary houses different species in danger of extinction as a natural sanctuary for: hummingbirds, doves, chuchubi; trupial;

pecho gel, bats, lizards, totokis, geccos, crabs, beetles, mantis, santaneros, spiders. They are our daily dwellers and endemic fauna, even the invasive boa and the cane toad are casual visitors we wish no to see. On picture below, is our dreaded centipede who loves to scavenge and wander around for small insects, frogs and small rodents that lives under rocks boulders that are part of our garden. however we must be vigilant since occasionally we must prevent them going inside. We catch them on a shovel or in a carton box and transport them to safer place.

In our gallery art we also display historical as well as native Aruban art and artifacts. Follow our guided tours conducted by its founder and curator, incorporating works of art, archaeological objects, tools and weapons to tell the story of Aruba. Discover nature and island culture, through an educational and mind-opening session for the curious and bohemian soul, the adventurous spirit and those interested in acquiring island knowledge. Interact and get infected with a good predisposition to share our concern for preserving your fragile travel destination.□

Did you say that you love Aruba its origins and cultural heritage? Than this private encounter with our columnist anthropologist is just as you. Sessions created in a gorgeous setting for visitor with special interests. Appointment is required. etnianaativa03@gmail.com or Whatsapp us 297 592 2702 for a private reservation.

Millennial Money: Just how passive is passive income?

By **COLIN BERESFORD** of **NerdWallet**

The opportunity to make money while we sleep is one few of us would turn down. And passive income, at face value, suggests we can do just that.

Social media is chock-full of influencers telling us how to make passive income. And while many of those content creators do actually earn money even when they're not on the clock, fewer of them are forthcoming about the work required to get there.

"A lot of people are surprised by how much work it takes because I think a lot of people who are earning a passive income are talking about how great it is having earned that," says Pat Flynn, a California-based entrepreneur and creator of the "Smart Passive Income" podcast. "But they don't necessarily tell you the whole truth. You're seeing the tip of the iceberg."

"Passive" income, in most cases, won't be created passively. Whatever the pursuit — investing in stocks to receive dividends, buying rental properties, earning ad revenue on video channels — you'll have to put in work upfront before you can start making money while doing little, or no,



In this June 15, 2018, file photo, cash is fanned out from a wallet in North Andover, Mass.

Associated Press

work. And in many cases, you'll have to keep doing work to maintain that income, too.

PASSIVE INCOME HAS NO SET DEFINITION

When does a job or side hustle turn into passive income? That depends on how you define it.

There is no clear-cut point where income turns passive. For some, it could be when no work or upkeep is required, or for others, it could be when a minimal amount of work each week is required. And "minimal work" is also subjective.

"Passive income, for me, is really something that you

have to work to set up, but after that, it takes very minimal work to maintain and to keep that income stream coming," says Joseph Hogue, a chartered financial analyst and creator of the YouTube channel Let's Talk Money.

Other sources of passive income include investing in bonds or peer-to-peer lending, generating ad revenue from a blog, or putting your money in a high-yield savings account. Even the money an artist makes through plays of their songs on a streaming platform can qualify as passive income.

IF YOU WANT PASSIVE INCOME, BE READY TO WORK

Contrary to what the phrase passive income suggests, you need to put in work in order to attain it. Investing money you inherited or won in a lottery may be the only path to truly passive income, start to finish. But for most of us, creating this new revenue stream will involve investing money made from more traditional means like a job, or investing our time building a source of income from the ground up.

Without a large initial financial investment, people often underestimate

the "sweat equity" or time and energy required at the beginning, says Jannese Torres-Rodriguez, a Florida-based entrepreneur and creator of the "Yo Quiero Dinero" podcast.

"That initial workload, that time it's going to take to get to a place where it's passive, is what freaks a lot of people out and makes them think that, 'Oh, well, this is obviously a scam because I just want to make money quickly,'" says Torres-Rodriguez.

For both Torres-Rodriguez and Flynn, it took at least a year before they saw earnings from some of their current sources of passive income. Both said that it took consistent work during that period before they started seeing money come from their blogs, including from affiliate marketing, ad revenue and selling courses, among other sources.

The amount of work upfront can depend on the income stream and what you want to get out of it. For instance, if you're making income from rental properties, you can hire a person or a company to take care of all the property management. That'll take away from your earnings, but putting in your own time will make the income more active than passive. □

Walmart invests in indoor vertical farming startup Plenty

By **ANNE D'INNOCENZIO**
The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Walmart said Tuesday it has taken a stake in agriculture startup Plenty, becoming the first large U.S. retailer to significantly invest in indoor vertical farming as a way to deliver fresher produce to its stores.

Vertical farmers tout their high-quality produce that brings higher yields while using less water and land. The method also doesn't use pesticide, and the produce can be grown year round near the point of distribution, increasing the reliability of supply.

Walmart, the nation's larg-

est retailer, declined to comment on the size of its investment or the financial terms of the deal. But the retailer based in Bentonville, Arkansas, said that it will join Plenty's board at the close of the transaction.

The deal comes as grocery stores are under pressure to have more environmentally friendly practices. Plenty, based in San Francisco, is one of many players in the fast-growing field of indoor farming. Others include Morehead, Kentucky-based AppHarvest, and New York-based Gotham Greens.

In a recent global survey,

consulting firm Agritecture — which works with urban farmers — found that at least 74 indoor farming companies were founded in 2020 alone.

Plenty, which was founded in 2014 and has a vertical farm in South San Francisco, also operates an indoor plant science research facility in Laramie, Wyoming. It is now building in Compton, California, what it says will be the world's highest output vertical indoor farm, due to open in the second half of this year.

Plenty said its vertical farming towers are designed to grow multiple crops on one platform in a building the



This undated photo provided by Walmart via Plenty, shows a Plenty Farms tower robot.

Associated Press

size of a big box retail store. Its systems feature vertical plant towers, LED lighting and robots to plant, feed and harvest crops. It says

its farms use 1% of the land that an outdoor farm requires while delivering anywhere from 150 to 350 times more food per acre. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 41 Make do

1 Flower part

6 Fake

10 Likely

11 Comet's place

12 Pillages

13 Afghan capital

14 Land in the sea

15 Limited

16 Peculiarity

17 British rule in India

18 Casual top

19 Like a hot rod

22 Brooklyn team

23 Castle surrounder

26 Absorbed

29 Bowler, for one

32 Battleship letters

33 Soccer's Hamm

34 Homecoming group

36 Drill parts

37 Well-founded

38 "Understand?"

39 Leaves out

40 Famed fur tycoon

42 Unemotional

DOWN

1 Breaks apart

2 Beach problem

3 Stick at a table

4 Poker payment

5 "— Mis-érables"

6 Bridge

7 Custom right

8 Less than

9 Scuffle

11 Winter Olympics feats

15 Craze

17 Echoes

20 Score

21 "Tamerlane"

24 Acknowledge

25 College cost

27 Letter before omega

28 Danish, e.g.

29 Great

30 Crockett's last stand

31 Colorful flower

35 Spider's kin

36 Optimum

38 Neon, e.g.

SABER PANE
GRAVE OVENS
RULES SEPTA
ABE IRS ART
MARYSHELLEY
OTO LIAR
SCADS CASTS
PAGE PUN
EMILYBRONTE
NET ESS EAR
DRAMA OSAKA
SATES RATES
SENT STONE

Monday's answer

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18
19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three I's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-26

CRYPTOQUOTE

GSV HGFKRW MVRGSVI
ULITREV MLI ULITVG: GSV
MZREV ULITREV ZMW
ULITVG: GSV DRIV ULITREV
YFG WL MLG ULITVG: GSNZIE
HAZHA

Monday's Cryptoquote: IN YOUTH, WE RUN INTO DIFFICULTIES. AND IN OLD AGE, DIFFICULTIES RUN INTO US. — JOSH BILLINGS

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Facebook parent Meta creates powerful AI supercomputer



Facebook employees take a photo with the company's new name and logo outside its headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif., Oct. 28, 2021.

Associated Press

MENLO PARK, Calif. (AP) —

Facebook's parent company Meta on Monday said it has created what it believes is among the fastest artificial intelligence supercomputers running today.

The social media giant said it hopes the machine will help lay the groundwork for its building of the metaverse, a virtual reality construct intended to supplant the internet as we know it today.

Facebook said it believes

the computer will be the fastest in the world once it is fully built around the middle of the year.

Supercomputers are extremely fast and powerful machines built to do complex calculations not possible with a regular home computer. Meta did not disclose where the computer is located or how much it is costing to build. The computer, which is already up and running but is still being built, is called AI Research SuperCluster. Meta says it will help its AI researchers build "new and better" artificial intelligence models that can learn from "trillions" of examples and work across hundreds of different languages simultaneously and analyze text, images and video together. □

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Sundance doc looks at man behind the modern bulletproof vest

By **LINDSEY BAHR**
AP Film Writer

Richard Davis was a bankrupt pizzeria owner when he got the idea for a bulletproof vest in 1969 Michigan. Body armor was nothing new, of course, but Davis had an inkling that he could make something lighter that could be worn, undetected, under clothes. Kevlar, he'd discover, was the answer. And to prove that his invention actually worked, Davis, a former Marine and born showman, went to some extraordinary lengths: He shot himself over 190 times.

Somehow, that's not even the wildest part of his story, which is chronicled in the lively documentary "2nd Chance," which premiered this weekend at the Sundance Film Festival.

Utilizing new interviews with Davis, friends, enemies and ex-wives, the film charts the formation of his company Second Chance, its triumphs (saving hundreds of lives) and tragedies, including the death of a police officer after the company started using Zylon in its vest.

"2nd Chance" is the documentary feature debut of Ramin Bahrani, the Iranian-



This image shows Richard Davis from the documentary "2nd Chance" by Ramin Bahrani, an official selection of the Premieres section at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival.

Associated Press

American filmmaker whose films often explore and dismantle notions of the American dream, including "Chop Shop" and "99 Homes."

He was editing his last feature, "The White Tiger," when several producers approached him about making a narrative film about Davis. But Bahrani surprised them when he said he'd rather make a doc.

"I tried to go there not

knowing and not having a set plan and just waiting for the people to tell me things," Bahrani said. "With the short docs I had made, I remember calling Werner Herzog and asking him what's the approach? His advice was don't pre-interview people on the phone, don't talk to them before you meet them. Just start rolling the camera and get those immediate interactions."

Davis is an eccentric char-

acter who is at times shockingly candid and other times a wholly unreliable narrator, which Bahrani explores with a clear-eyed empathy.

"Some of what he says can be uncomfortable to hear and I don't agree with his positions. But at the same time, he was charming, he was friendly. When we showed up every day and we would show up to meet him, he cooked mac and cheese for the crew and

fed us cookies," Bahrani said.

"What was interesting for me in Richard was, you couldn't pin him down to just wanting to make a lot of money. I kind of agree with his second wife that he wasn't motivated necessarily by money. But I do think he enjoyed being the star. There is a narcissism to him. There is an ability of believing his own deceptions that did remind me of a lot of people in power even in this country," Bahrani continued.

"It reminds me of some modern or harsh version of Arthur Miller's 'All My Sons,' where the father has a successful factory making airplanes for the war and the son comes to understand that some of these planes are faulty and resulted in the death of pilots. The father ends up really hitting a moral force from the son and it ends up in a suicide. There's a moral center to the play. Here, somehow that moral center within Richard's own world seemed absent. He started another company that was even more successful, or just as successful. There's something disturbing in that." □



This cover image released by Ballantine shows "Violeta" by Isabel Allende.

Associated Press

By **ANITA SNOW**
Associated Press

"Violeta," by Isabel Allen-

Review: Allende's 'Violeta,' an epic South American tale

de. (Random House) Chilean writer Isabel Allende's latest novel is "Violeta," an epic tale that transports readers across a century of South American history, through economic collapse, dictatorship and natural disasters like an earthquake and a hurricane.

From the aftermath of World War I to the present day, narrator Violeta del Valle recounts the story of her life in an unnamed South American country with a book-long letter to her grandson Camilo.

Violeta tells of living through the Spanish flu pandemic as the youngest child and only daughter in a family of five sons.

After her father loses everything in the Great Depression, the family must relinquish their comfort in an old mansion in the nation's capital and adopt a more modest life in the country's rural south.

"Violeta" recalls Allende's best known and highly successful novel, "The House of Spirits," which weaves together the personal and the political in a saga stretching across decades.

"Violeta" also details the horrors of the 1970s dictatorships in South America, which saw tens of thousands of suspected political opponents kidnapped, tortured and killed, often through Op-

eration Condor, a U.S.-backed alliance among the region's right-wing military governments.

"The government was committing atrocities, but you could walk down the street and sleep soundly at night without worrying about common criminals," Violeta writes of those repressive times.

Violeta's son is a journalist who seeks exile, first in Argentina, then in Norway after learning he is on the dictatorship's black list.

Violeta suspects her son's father of involvement in the repression through his work as a pilot. Much of the book involves Violeta's long, passionate, but troubled relationship with

her son's father following a short, unsatisfying marriage. Ultimately, she obtains contentment late in life with a retired diplomat and naturalist.

Considered the world's most widely read Spanish-language author, Allende is known for her many novels including "Eva Luna," "Of Love and Shadows" and "A Long Petal of the Sea," as well as nonfiction books such as "Paula," a 1994 memoir.

Allende left Chile for exile two years after Salvador Allende, her father's first cousin, was overthrown in a 1973 coup. Isabel Allende lived for years in Venezuela before settling in the United States. □

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Hector wins final World Cup giant slalom before Olympics

SAN VIGILIO DI MAREBBE, Italy (AP) — After waiting seven years for a second World Cup win, Sara Hector now has three more victories in giant slalom — and they could not have come at a better time with the Winter Olympics starting next week.

Hector won the final World Cup GS on Tuesday before the Beijing Olympics, with 2018 gold medalist Mikaela Shiffrin in fifth.

Hector was second after the opening run but overtook defending overall champion Petra Vlhova for her second straight GS victory, and her third this season. Her only previous World Cup win had been in December 2014.

The Swedish skier let out a scream after crossing the line 0.15 seconds ahead of Vlhova on a clear and cold day at Kronplatz mountain in the Dolomites.

"Crazy! I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw I was



Sweden's Sara Hector celebrates at the finish area of an alpine ski, women's World Cup giant slalom, in Kronplatz, Italy, Tuesday, Jan. 25, 2022.

Associated Press

that fast when I came to the finish. Incredible," Hector said. "There are so many good skiers I'm definitely not unbeatable. But now I've been fast so that's really, really cool."

Tessa Worley of France was third, 0.52 behind Hector and just ahead of Federica Brignone. Shiffrin was 0.81 slower than Hector and slipped to third in the giant slalom standings.

Hector leads the standings ahead of Worley by 95 points. The 29-year-old puts her improvement down to developing a better understanding of her needs. "I think for me the most

important is to really feel calm...so I can focus. I'm easily wound up and then I'm having problems," Hector said.

"It took me a long time to understand what I need. Now I know much more about what I need and that's been cool to find out."

The giant slalom opens the women's skiing program in China on Feb. 7.

Shiffrin also lost ground in the overall standings. The American skier's lead over Vlhova was cut to only 17 points.

"When you are first after the first run you want to win," said Vlhova. "But it's really difficult to beat Sara because she's really strong this year."

The women's World Cup circuit moves this weekend to Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany — where a downhill and super-G are scheduled — before a pause for the Olympics. □

Sean Payton resigns as coach of New Orleans Saints

By BRETT MARTEL
AP Sports Writer

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — New Orleans Saints coach Sean Payton, whose 15-year tenure with the club included its only Super Bowl championship and also a one-season suspension stemming from the NFL's bounty investigation, is retiring from coaching. Payton informed the team on Tuesday that he is leaving his first and only NFL head coaching job with a 152-89 regular-season record — and nine playoff appearances — in 15 seasons. The Saints won the NFL title in 2009.

The Saints made Payton a first-time head coach in 2006, when he oversaw a

stunning turnaround in the franchise's first season back in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. The club had been displaced from the city during the entire 2005 season, going 3-13. The Saints went 10-6 and advanced to the NFC championship game in Payton's first season. He has coached the Saints to the postseason eight other times in his 15 seasons since. New Orleans narrowly missed the playoffs this season, going 9-8 in its first campaign since the retirement of Drew Brees. Payton had lured the quarterback to New Orleans as a free agent in 2006 and Brees went on to set every sig-

nificant franchise passing record. Under Payton, the Saints became a perennial contender, and they beat Peyton Manning and Indianapolis 31-17 to win their lone Super Bowl. They also lost the 2018 conference title game to the Rams after a blown officiating call that led to a temporary NFL rules change.

Payton was a member of the league's powerful competition committee from 2017 until leaving that position last November.

A valued offensive assistant for the Eagles, Giants and Cowboys before landing the head coaching job in New Orleans, Payton actually played in the NFL — as



New Orleans Saints head coach Sean Payton is shown during the second half of an NFL football game against the New York Jets, Sunday, Dec. 12, 2021, in East Rutherford, N.J.

Associated Press

a replacement player for the Bears during the 1987 strike.

He missed the 2012 season when the NFL suspended Payton, assistant coach Joe Vitt, general manager Mickey Loomis and four players after an investiga-

tion found the Saints had a performance pool offering cash rewards for key plays, including big hits. The player suspensions eventually were overturned by former NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue, and Payton was reinstated early in 2013. □



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